

LIFE AND CRIMES OF BRIDGET DURGAN,

THE MURDERESS OF THE LOVELY MRS. ELLEN CORIEL, WHOM SHE
KILLED IN HOPES OF TAKING HER PLACE IN DR. CORIEL'S HOUSE.



Poor Mrs. Coriel begging her murderess to allow her to kiss the baby before she killed her.—Narrative.

ALSO BRIDGET'S FULL CONFESSION
ABOUT HER ALLEGED INTIMACY WITH DR. CORIEL:
BY REV. MR. BRENDAN.

C. W. ALEXANDER, PUBLISHER, 224 SOUTH THIRD ST., PHILADELPHIA.

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LIFE, CRIMES, AND CONFESSION

OF

BRIDGET DURGAN,

THE FIENDISH MURDERESS OF MRS. CORIEL;

WHOM SHE BUTCHERED, HOPING TO TAKE HER PLACE
IN THE AFFECTIONS OF THE HUSBAND OF HER
INNOCENT AND LOVELY VICTIM.

THE ONLY AUTHENTIC, AND HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED

HISTORY OF HER WHOLE LIFE; AND THE HIDEOUS CRIME
FOR WHICH SHE WAS EXECUTED AT NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

BY REV. MR. BRENDAN.

PHILADELPHIA.
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"For the love of God, Bridget!" pleaded poor Mrs. Coriel, "let me kiss my baby before you kill me! please do!"

BRIDGET DURGAN'S

LIFE, CONFESSION, AND EXECUTION.

Throughout all the annals of crime, there has never been recorded a more revolting, wicked deed, than that for which the wretched perpetrator, Bridget Durgan, paid the forfeit of her life in the jail yard at New Brunswick, New Jersey, on August 30, 1867.

Sometime during the year 1866, Bridget Durgan applied at the door of Mrs. Coriel, in the village of New Market, on the Central rail road, only a short distance west of Plainfield, New Jersey, for a situation. At first so forbidding was her appearance, that Mrs. Coriel would have nothing to say to her, and did not wish to have anything to do with her. But, so persevering was Bridget, and she told such a pitiful tale, that Mrs. Coriel, who, beside being possessed of the greatest beauty, had a tender and noble heart, began to relent, and she finally admitted the girl to her household as a servant. Alas! how little did the unfortunate lady dream that the fiend she was thus befriending, would, in less than one short year become her brutal murderess.

Month rolled on after month; and, notwithstanding her natural goodness of heart, Mrs. Coriel could not, at times, repress the loathing she had for Bridget. This feeling increased to such a degree, that she told Bridget that she could not have her in the house any longer, and ordered her to leave at the end of that month and get another place.

This roused the smouldering embers of wickedness to raging flames within the breast of the demon girl; and she resolved to kill her kind and indulgent mistress at the first opportunity that she could do so without danger of discovery.

The time for her stay at Dr. Coriel's becoming short, and as yet not presenting the coveted chance for the accomplishment of her hellish design, Bridget feigned a sudden illness, and begged most piteously not to be sent away.

Again Mrs. Coriel's kind heart gave way, and, on conferring with her husband, the doctor, who was just as tender in his disposition as his wife, it was agreed to allow Bridget to remain until she was well; especially as the winter was now come on, and their servant might suffer if she were discharged then.

At last the long-desired opportunity came for the object of the murderess. On the night of February 25th Dr. Coriel was suddenly called out to attend a patient, and would not likely be at home for sometime. Mrs. Coriel had been unwell all day, and she laid down on a sofa in the sitting room to see if the rest would not make her feel better. Previously, however, she hushed her babe—little Mamey—to sleep, and placed her softly and gently in the crib with a fond kiss.

Now then was the wicked creature's time. Stealthily she stole into the room, a lamp in one hand, and a huge butcher knife in the other. While she kept the weapon hidden behind her, she set the lamp down, and then sprang upon her victim with the ferocity of a panther. Several times she plunged the deadly blade into her victim's breast and shoulders before the latter could spring up and grapple with her.

Then came that fearful struggle; and the two rolled over the floor, till, getting herself loose, Mrs. Coriel sprang up, and attempted to reach the crib in the bedroom to rescue her infant and then escape from the house for help. But Bridget was a stout, powerful woman; and, prompted by the Devil and fear of discovery, she bounded after her victim, dashed her on the bed, and, as she lay there with clasped hands, pleading for her life, she stabbed her again and again, till she thought she was dead; and then flung her on the floor, and proceeded to the rest of her diabolical work. Running back into the adjoining room, she seized the lamp—filled with coal oil—and, rushing into the apartment where her victim lay, she pitched it in under the bed, then threw in the bed clothes on the flames, snatched up the baby out of the crib, and started for the nearest house, intending to give an alarm that robbers had broken into the house, and murdered Mrs. Coriel.

During this time the victim, whose life blood was gushing from so many different wounds, had recovered her consciousness; and, with a superhuman effort, she started slowly, half crawling and creeping along, in pursuit of Bridget, whom she thus saw carrying off her darling child.

What agonizing thoughts passed through her mind at that moment, of course no human being will ever know; but her anguish must have been worse than death itself; for she doubtless believed that the fiendish woman intended to murder the babe as well as its mother.

Bridget had run but a short distance from the garden gate up the road, when the thought occurred to go back to the house and see for certain, whether her victim was quite really dead. Quickly she retraced her

steps, and there, just crawling out into the yard, she found poor Mrs. Coriel.

With a fierce oath, she ordered her victim to go back into the house, carrying the child in advance, and picking up the knife in a threatening manner. The dying woman turned her eyes upward to the fiend, in silent supplication, and then, with what little expiring strength she had left crawled slowly after Bridget into the house; still intent on saving her baby, which now being awake, held out its tiny hands toward her, and chuckled in its innocent way for her to take it.

When Bridget got into the bed room again, she set the child down on the floor, and, going outside, seized her victim, dragged her quickly into the room, and said:

"Now I'll make sure av yees! and I'll have yer hoosband, an' be hes mesthress and me own!"

She then took up the leg of a chair, that had been broken in the previous struggle, and deliberately snapping off a fragment of the runnel that remained attached to it, she advanced, and raised the improvised club to crush in the skull of her victim.

The doomed mother, with an unnatural strength, that was lent her by her agony, exclaimed, in a weak, gasping voice:

"Oh! Bridget! for the love of God and the virgin, don't kill Mamey! and please let me kiss her before you kill me!"

"Well" coolly replied the horrid murderess, "be queek about it now, and I'll let yees!"

Slowly the poor, dying mother crawled to the side of Mamey, the child and kissed her, oh how fondly, how tenderly, for the last time on earth.

Had there been one spark of womanhood in Bridget Dugan, she surely could not, blood-stained as she was, have inflicted further injury upon her victim. But, with a hideous malignity of heart, she took hold of Mrs. Coriel's dress, dragged her back from the baby, and battered her head in with the chair leg. Nor did she cease her blows until her victim was perfectly dead.

Once more Bridget Dugan, the foul murderess, with a further design in her vile heart, took up Mamey, went out, shut the bed room door, so that the fire, already blazing, might be sure to consume the mutilated corpse of her former mistress; and then, passing out to the road, hurried to the house of of Isaac Coriel. This gentleman was a relative by marriage, of Mrs. Coriel.

Here she knocked loudly, and soon roused up the inmates; who, when they heard her frightful story about the robbers, turned out and alarmed the whole village. The neighbors instantly ran to Dr. Coriel's house, and got there just in time to extinguish the fire, and rescue the body of Mrs. Coriel from the devouring flames.

Several persons, who were more collected than the rest, at once began to investigate the matter, and, instead of crediting Bridget's terrible tale, they were speedily convinced that she, herself was the guilty wretch. They arrested her; and she was duely tried, convicted, and hung in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on August 30 1867.

During her imprisonment, Bridget pretended to make three or four different confessions to different persons. But they were all such a mixture of truth and lies, that they could not be depended on at all. The reason she thus prevaricated was that because she thought by some means or other to enlist the sympathy of these persons, and obtain through them a pardon or at least a respite. She kept this up almost till the very morning of her execution. But when she found there was no hope at all for escape from the doom affixed to her crime, she gave into the possession of a christian gentleman a full confession of her crimes, and a history of her life, which have been unpublished until now.

She could read and write very well, instead of being ignorant, as has been represented; and she implored the reverend gentleman to publish her life after altering and correcting the manuscript, as a warning to all young persons, against allowing themselves to fall into the ways and the habits that caused her ruin and brought her to such a fearful punishment. We give it in full just as we received it.

BRIDGET'S EARLY LIFE.

In my prison cell in the town of New Brunswick, I am sitting all alone tonight. Alone, did I say? no! no! not alone! Not alone! for all round me flit spectres of darkness and woe. They shake their shadowy fingers in my face, and whisper to me that there is no reprieve! no pardon! I must be hung tomorrow. Hung! It must be an awful death to be hung! To have a rope put round my neck, to be choked, and have my neck broken, and then dangle down there in the prison yard like an old cat. That is dreadful to be hung that way! But I do not believe there is any chance for my escape. Everybody is very bitter against me; especially these Jersey people. It makes no difference to them that I am a woman. They are very hard-natured folks. But there is no use in my feeling a bit angry at them. No! for I will be hung certain, and it will make me feel better if I make a true confession. I will write it out now, and give it to Mr. Brendan; as he is the only one I think anything of at all. I am not friendly to these newspaper fellows; for they set everybody down on me. I will give this to Mr. Brendan before I leave this cell to go to the gallows down in the yard tomorrow.

Now, dear Mr. Brendan, with my dying, solemn voice I will write it down, as I cannot speak it, that all the other confessions I have made were false. People used to bother me so that I would tell them every

thing that came into my head, just for the fun of it. But I am past all that now, and what I am going to write about my miserable life and my crimes is true every whit. And, with my last breath I will ask you to publish it to the world, and show young people the danger of going into wrong ways in their youth.

I was born in the village of Duncliffe, County Sligo, Ireland, in 1843; and was raised in pretty good circumstances, at least for the station in life occupied by my family. My childhood, up to twelve years of age, was passed in my native village of Duncliffe; and then it was resolved by my father and mother, to put me out to service in the household of a gentleman, who lived close by. There I continued to live for about three years; when a circumstance occurred, that shaped my after life in the channel which has lead me now to the disgrace of dying on the gallows.

There was a May day party given, and as I was taken along with the family to help to wait on them, I was thus thrown into the company of James, the son of my employer. He had always been very attentive to me, but on this day he was particularly so; and before the close of the excursion he invited me to take a stroll with him into a piece of woodland near by. He was so kind and merry, that I soon forgot all else than the pleasure of being with him.

But there is no need to repeat a tale so common, and so often heard. Afterwards when I found what had become of me, I resolved to leave Ireland and come to America, where I would be known by nobody. As may be supposed, I was furnished with money to come out here by parties, who were only too glad to be rid of me at so small an expense. In the regular time I arrived here and hired myself out to do housework. But, after I had been at my place for a few months, my mistress, making a discovery, would not keep me any longer; but turned me out of the house. From that moment I began to hate everybody; but most of all mistresses; and I resolved to kill some one if the chance only came in my way.

I wandered about till at last I got into a shelter. Some weeks after that I was free on account of getting rid of my incumbrance. This was in New York; and one day as I was walking along the street, I met a woman named Ellen Gilroy, who spoke to me and asked me if I were not in trouble. I told her that I was, and then she said she had seen me one day up at the asylum where I had been, and where she had also been doing some cleaning.

"What do you expect to do now?" asked she.

"I don't know," said I, but I'd do most anything to get along."

"You don't mean to work, do you?" says she.

"Yes," says I, "I want to find a place."

"Why, that's all nonsense! What's the use of your going to work when you'd be turned out in a day or two, or jest soon as you are found

out. You come with me, and I'll show you how to git along without that!

I did not care what I did; nor what became of me; and away I went with Ellen Gilroy. She took me to a tenement house in the lowest part of the city, and there I stayed for about three months, doing just as she and the rest of the women there did.

One night the police came down to the house about twelve o' clock at night to arrest one of us for robbing a man. Being fearful that they intended to take me, I jumped out of the second story back window, got into an alley that ran behind a fence, and escaped, although the police were standing all' around the house. I walked about the street the whole of that night, and in the morning went over to Brooklyn. There I made a resolution to do better, and get a place if I could. At last I made a bargain with a woman who sold fish, to help her for two dollars a week.

I behaved very well for sometime, and finally got into Mr. Dolan's family to do the housework. There I lived about three months, when I left and took service with a Mrs. Horning. She and I did not agree very well, and one day she ordered me to leave; and called me a devilish, infernal slut. This roused my blood, and I went up to my room, with the full determination to kill both her and her sister, who had also treated me badly.

So, after I had packed up what things I wanted to take with me, I went down to the kitchen, and got a large carving knife, which I sharpened on a sand stone. I concealed this knife under my frock skirt, and then I waited up on a dark landing at the top of the second story stairs till I thought it would be about time for Mrs. Horning to go to bed. As it happened, however, she was taken suddenly sick at least an hour before her usual time for retiring; and Mr. Horning came out of the store and helped her up stairs to her room.

The way the stairs were arranged, it was impossible for me to get out of the room, either up or down; and I could not hide myself. So, when they came up I had to face it out on them.

"What are you doing here, Bridget?" asked Mr. Horning, in a rough way, taking hold of me by the shoulder.

I had a great mind to pull out my knife and run it into his heart; but I was afraid somebody else would be down stairs and give an alarm and the police would catch me; so I only said:

"Why, I'm a getting my things. Your wife told me to leave; and she called me a devilish infernal slut! And she can just thank her lucky stars I didn't kill her for it; for I'm no more of a slut than she is! not a bit! I want you to know!"

"She's got a knife! cried out Mrs. Horning, "she's got a knife under her frock!"

"Have you got a knife?" asked Mr. Horning, stepping back a little from me.

"Yes, I have got a knife!" said I, "and if you lay your finger on me I'll have your heart's blood! I don't want to hurt you; nor your nasty, mean, old lying wife; but don't touch me."

By this time the sister came up stairs and helped Mrs. Horning, while Mr. Horning turned on me and said:

"Look here, Bridget, I've a great mind to take you right down to the station house, and have you put in prison. I could send you to Sing Sing for several years; but I do not wish to do so. I only want you to clear out of my house instantly, and never come near it again. If you do, I will have you taken just as sure as you are alive!"

"All right!" said I, "let me get my things, and I'll be agoing out of your old house in two minutes, I will!"

"Very well," says he, "but do it mighty quick!"

So I went up stairs to my own room, and, getting my bundle and my band box, I went down stairs and through the dining room, where I left the knife, for fear he would have me arrested, and I would be committed for having stolen it.

I felt pretty hard against Mrs. Horning, and I made up my mind to kill her anyhow. But I knew there would be a watch kept up for a good, long while; and so I avoided going near the house, or even into the proximity of the place, for sometime, in order that they might think that I had gone out of the city.

During this period I could not get any place, or employment; and so I peddled apples round the streets, disguised as an old woman; so that I could get along and make a living. When I thought I would not be suspected, I went down in the direction of Horning's house several times, but I never could see either Mrs. Horning or her sister, Sarah.

Finding that I was not likely to do anything that way, I bought a little pound cake, and putting a lot of arsenic into it, I sent it very nicely done up in a wedding box, hoping that all the Hornings would eat some of it.

The next day, after I sent it, I went down that way once more, hoping to see crape on the door. But, instead of that, I saw the cake tossed into the middle of the street. From this I judged that I was found out and I concluded that it would not do to try my game any longer. So going down to the Ferry I took the boat over to New York.

There were two men on the boat who looked very much like detectives and I noticed that they kept watching me rather closely. This made me feel a good deal nervous and uneasy; and I was very glad when I saw them walk away down a street in New York, in an opposite direction to the one I took.

I made my way to one of my old friends, who lived in the rear of a tenement house in Baxter street. She was very glad to see me, and I did some work for her, for which she let me stay there hidden for three weeks or so.

One night a couple of her friends came to see her. They brought a bottle of whiskey with them, and we all drank considerable. After a little while a dispute arose about something, and a fight took place, in which my friend—I do not mention her name, as it might do her some harm—took sides with the others against me. It ended in my being badly beat, and kicked into the street. I had no other place to go to, so I determined to leave the city.

SHE GOES TO NEW JERSEY.

From New York I made my way to Newark, where I stayed a little time at a Mr. Smith's house. But he had two sons, who made so much fun of me because they said I was so ugly, that I could not stay there, and I left and walked all the way to Somerville, where I obtained some employment in a farmer's house.

While there I began to be tired of life. Everybody seemed to hate me and I hated everybody; and did not care what became of me.

One day, it was early in the morning, I got up, and, after making the fire, and putting on the kettle to make the coffee, I went out into a piece of woods through which flowed a large ditch. Taking off my frock, I got some big stones, tied them around my neck, and was just on the point of jumping into the water and drowning myself, when something came over me and I stopped. Then, as I thought more over it, I concluded that it would be foolish for me to commit suicide; and so I took the stones from around my neck, put on my frock again, and went back to the house.

It was not long before the temptation returned to me to make my way back to New York, and kill Mrs. Horning. This feeling became so very strong on me that I could not resist it. I felt that I would have to kill somebody, and get hung for it. And now, here I am in this prison cell, and my foreboding has come true. Tomorrow I will be hung like an old cat, and nobody will say they are sorry for Bridget Durgan; but they will say it served me right. Well, I do not care, anyhow; it is my fate. But I do not harbor any bad feelings toward anybody. I am an awful sinner; and have done a good many wicked acts during my short and miserable life; but I hope to be forgiven in the other world.

I wonder if I will see Mrs. Coriel after I am dead, and go to the other world. That is the hardest part of all. I would sooner suffer any tor-

ture that could be inflicted on me, if I was only sure by doing so I would be spared seeing the spirit of the poor woman, who was so kind and gentle to me.

In pursuit of the idea of killing Mrs. Horning, I got my wages from the farmer whom I lived with, and started back for New York. But when I reached the first way station, I suddenly changed my mind, but I could not tell why, and I cannot even now account for it; and resolved to go to Philadelphia. There I went to an intelligence office somewhere in Eighth Street, I think it was, and obtained a situation immediately. But I was too restless to stay long. My evil genius again got possession of me, and I once more became imbued with the idea of going to New York and killing Mrs. Horning. This came to be so strong on me that I could not drive it off, and at last I set out again for the City of New York, to put my design into effect.

As I was going down to the boat to cross over to Camden, I stopped to look at a picture paper that was tacked up at a bookstand on Walnut Street wharf. It had a picture in it of a woman who had another one down on the floor, and was stabbing her with a knife. That picture made a great impression on my mind; and I bought the paper and read it all through. I thought it would be splendid to have my name in that paper and have a picture of me in it.

Oh, Mr. Brendan, I think now as I am looking in the face of Death that those kinds of papers have a very bad effect on the community. People like me, who have not much education, think it is a great thing to be noticed in that way, and consequently there is more crime committed than there would be if these papers were so stopped.

I sat in the cars and calculated how long it would most likely be before I killed Mrs. Horning, and would have a picture in the paper about it. But when I got to Elizabeth, I bought a newspaper from a boy, and the first thing I saw was the death of Mrs. Horning.

The sudden disappointment gave me such a shock that I fell down in the car in a fit. I was always subject to those fits from my childhood.

I remained unconscious. I was afterwards told, for about twenty minutes and when recovered I was lying on a settee in the station.

SHE GOES TO NEW MARKET.

From here, through the kindness of a gentleman, who happened to be travelling that way, I got to the town of New Market where it was not long before I obtained the situation at the house of Mrs. Coriel wife of Doctor Coriel.

When I first took this situation I never dreamed of such a thing as doing Mrs. Coriel, or any one belonging to her, any harm. In truth she was the only lady who ever treated me so kindly, in all my wretched lifetime. And oh, now that I am to be ushered in the presence of my maker, to be confronted with the spirit of the poor, dear lady, I feel the true horror of my position; and see the true enormity of my crime. She was never an enemy of mine; for the sharp words she sometimes spoke to me, were well deserved, as I used to be have very ugly to her. Instead of dying my hands in her blood, I ought to have defended her against who would have done her any harm. But the frightful dead is past and the only atonement I can make is to give up my life on the scaffold. I wish I could suffer tenfold more, for I deserved to do so.

I wish to say a few words in regard to the stories I have told at various times, since my imprisonment, about the alleged intimacy between Mrs. Coriel's husband and myself.

Some short time after I first went to live at his house, I became very much attached to the Doctor, and began to love him with the greatest fervor. He was a gentleman with a very warm heart and exceedingly off-handed and good natured. He would speak in a quick and sometimes careless way; but he never ment anything by it.

And I desire here to say in the most solemn manner—for, now that I am really a dying woman, without the slightest hope of reprieve, much less pardon, further lying will do me no good—that there is not the slightest truth in any of the reports that got out about Doctor Coriel and myself, so far as he was concerned. He never offered me the slightest advance or insult of anykind whatever, though, in my wickedness I often wished that he would.

I have done him harm enough now, without dying and allowing such calumnies as these against his character to go undenied.

But I am getting weak, and must hasten to finish this confession, or I shall not get through it.

There is no necessity to go over all that occurred during all the time I lived with Mrs. Coriel: but only immediately preceeding the murder for which I am to suffer so justly.

About a month before the fated day, it came into my head that if Mrs. Coriel were only out of the way, that I would have a very good place with the Doctor, as he would no doubt still keep house and have me to

take care of it and Mamey, who was fond of me. This brought Mrs. Horning into my mind, and instantly, like a flash of lightning, I felt impelled to kill Mrs. Coriel.

"You must kill somebody!" whispered the Devil in my ear.

I tried my best to get rid of this wicked impression and drive it off. But the harder I tried, the harder it got hold of me; and on several occasions during the month of February I took a hatchet or knife, or a club upstairs with the express purpose of committing the murder. But every time a fear of discovery prevented me. And sometimes, when good opportunities occurred, the kindness of my poor mistress would rise up between me and her, and defend her from me. At last, however the fatal day came.

On the morning of February 25th my mistress ordered me to scour off some knives. She did not wish the dirt in the house, so she told me to do the work in the back yard.

"Why can't I do it in here?" said I, in a mad kind of voice, just for the sake of having a quarrel with her.

"Because," replied she, "it will make too much dirt to do it in the house, Bridget."

"Well," said I, "can't the dirt be cleaned out of the house after the knives are cleaned? And anyhow, it's too cold to work out there this morning."

"Why, Bridget!" exclaimed Mrs. Coriel, "it was only the other day you washed out there, and would not come into the house when I told you to do so, although it was much colder then than it is today."

"Oh yes" said I "it's all very nice for you to order me out into the cold; but how would you like me to order you out into the cold if I was your mistress?"

"Well, Bridget, said she, "I would be very sorry to have a mistress like you"

"I expect you would," said I "and I'm just as sorry to have one that is so much like you; for you are always a tyrannizing over me."

I knew what a great lie that assertion was, for no woman could ever have been kinder than Mrs. Coriel was; but I said what I did, just for the sake of making her madder than she was already.

"Now, Bridget, answered my mistress, "I have put up with you just long enough. You have begged me so hard when you were sick, to be allowed to remain, that I could not find it in my heart to turn you out of the house; although if I had not prevented him, Doctor Coriel would have kicked you out like a dog. Now you will just go and do what you were told to do, without any more talk about it. And the day after tomorrow you must leave here, whether you are sick or well."

"I don't know about that," replied I: "I'll ask the Doctor to let me stay. He's got a warm side towards me."

The Devil prompted me to say this to Mrs. Coriel; who flew into an awful passion.

"You vile hussey!" she exclaimed, "how dare you speak of my husband in that manner! He shall send you away from this house this very day! Give Mamey to me this instant, and go right up stairs this instant and get your things ready!"

I had been nursing Mamey, the baby, and had her in my arms at that moment. Mrs. Coriel snatched her from me, and she began to cry to come back to me.

I took the knives, and started out of the kitchen, to go into the yard to clean them. And as I went out at the door, I stopped a moment and said some words of endearment to the baby in a taunting way, so as to make Mrs. Coriel more angry. In this I was successful for she rushed forward, and slamming the door shut with all her might she caused it to strike me violently on the forehead and make it bleed just a little.

I put my hand to my head, and taking it down saw the blood on my fingers. The sight of the blood put the devil right away into my heart, and fiercely opening the door again, I put my finger up to my forehead and said :

"Mrs. Coriel, do you see this blood?"

She looked at me and with a good deal of sorrow she said:

"Well, Bridget, I am sure I did not intend to injure you. I beg your pardon, but you did make me so angry. But come in the house and wash your forehead, and I'll run up and get you a strip of plaster."

"No your needn't!" said I, savagely. "You brought this blood, and you can take the consequences. When Doctor Coriel comes home I am going to show him, and tell him what a devil of a wife he's got, and then I'm a going right off and sue you! I'll show you, whether you'll treat me this way!"

And I slammed the door again and went on with my work.

The whole of that day I brooded over the affair, nor did I make any attempt to heal my wound; but on the contrary cut it deeper with my finger nail to keep it bleeding.

I took good care, however to keep out of Doctor Coriel's way, and Mrs. Coriel did not say anything to him, I suppose because she had hurt me, and felt rather bad about it, though for that matter it was nothing more than a little scratch.

About dinner time Mrs. Coriel who had not been right hearty for over a week previous to that, was taken with a sick headache, brought on, I suppose by the excitement of the quarrel and she was obliged to go up stairs and lie down.

After dinner, and when the Doctor had gone out I went up stairs with a butcher knife resolved to cut Mrs. Coriel's throat. But she had locked





CORRECT LIKENESS OF MRS. CORIEL,
As she was photographed the last time she went out walking.

her door; and when I knocked, she said she did not wish anything; and told me to go away. Being afraid that she might be suspecting what was intended, I knocked again, after a little while, and said:

"Mrs. Coriel, I am very sorry for what I said to you this morning. I am going away next Saturday night to Newark, and, as you have always treated me kindly and motherly, I don't want you to have any bad feelings toward me. I ask your pardon for having behaved so to you this morning. Let me do something for you; won't you, please?"

While I was saying this, I was playing with the butcher knife, and laughing to myself the whole time. I knew this was the only way to get around my mistress.

"Well, Bridget," said she, "go down and make me a good strong cup of tea, and bring it up to me."

"Yes, ma'am," answered I; and away I went down to the kitchen, delighted at the success of my ruse.

When the tea was ready, I took it up on a tray with a slice of toasted bread. Mamey cried to come to me; and, while my mistress was eating, I took the child up and nursed her.

"This tea is very nice, Bridget," said my mistress.

"I'm glad that you like it, ma'am," was my reply, "will you have any more of it?"

"No, Bridget, this is plenty, at least for the present."

"Shall I give the bed a shaking up for you?" asked I.

"Well, yes, but not now; after awhile, when I feel a little better, you can do so."

"I'll just lay the baby down then, while I fix your pillows a little bit smoother," said I, going round to the other side of the bed, so as to get behind her.

Putting the baby down, and taking the butcher knife out of my pocket, I was just on the point of running it into her back, when there came a loud knocking at the front door.

Quickly putting the knife into my pocket again, I hurried down to answer the knock. Somebody wanted the Doctor in a great hurry. He was out, and I did not know at what time he would be back, and the person who came for him, left a message for him to come as soon as he arrived at home.

Several times during the afternoon I went upstairs to commit the murder; but every time I did so something occurred to prevent the dreadful deed. The determination was firmly fixed in my mind, however, to do it before the next morning, cost what it would. Should it become necessary, I resolved to kill the baby and the Doctor too.

THE DREADFUL DEED.

Night came at last, and the Doctor got home to his supper; but had to go out immediately after he had finished it. The weather was cold and drizzly, the Doctor would not return till late, and I felt that this would be the opportunity.

After he left home the lamps were lit upstairs, the fire brisked up, and Mrs. Coriel went to lie down—she had been sitting up during the afternoon—while I took up some sewing.

All was very quiet; the baby went to sleep, and after Mrs. Coriel had laid her in her crib, she herself laid down and went into a light slumber, from which she several times started. Once she cried out:

“Don’t, Bridget, do such a thing as that!”

This startled me; but I saw she was only dreaming in her sleep, perhaps about the quarrel we had had in the morning.

Finally I concluded that the time had come for the accomplishment of my wicked purpose, and putting away my sewing, I got ready.

By this time my mistress was fast asleep, and, in order not to awaken her, I pulled off my shoes. I then got out my butcher knife, and examined it well, to see that it would do its bloody work surely.

Then clenching it firmly in my right hand, and, gritting my teeth together, I stepped as lightly as a cat into the room where my intended victim was lying on the lounge. My feelings at this juncture were perfectly terrible; it would be impossible to describe them at all.

I was afraid that Mrs. Coriel would wake up and see me, and my desire was to kill her instantly in her sleep, before she could get her eyes open; for I had read in the paper of a murder in Italy, or somewhere else, where the likeness of the murderer was fixed upon the retina of the murdered man’s eye.

This was not so easy, for the door was so arranged, that, in going in, I was obliged to face my intended victim. So, stepping as lightly as I could, and holding my butcher knife behind me all the time until I got into a good position. I was now standing with my clothes almost touching Mrs. Coriel’s knee. I bent one leg down like, to give me more firmness, and raised the knife.

My idea was to take good aim at her heart, give her a stab, and roll her on to the floor, with her face down, so that she could not see me. But the very moment I raised my arm clear of my body, it felt like as if I had it in boiling hot water, and something came into my eyes, making everything I looked at trembling and jerking about.

However, I could not wait to steady myself; and so I plunged the butcher knife into the body of Mrs. Coriel, taking as good an aim as possible at her heart!

As the blade went into the flesh of my victim, my previous sensation changed; and such a numbness came over me, that I could not for an instant draw the knife out. It was just like as though I had stuck it into a tough log, and could not pull it out. I felt Mrs. Coriel shiver like, and then she awoke, and I saw her look at me.

This made me feel terribly desperate; and with a great effort, I jerked the knife out and begun plunging it into her as hard and as fast as ever I could, without aiming at all; she struggling violently with me and dragging me toward the door.

She clutched me by the throat with one hand, and, seizing the knife in the other, she almost got it away from me. Then we rolled about the floor each of us trying to get the mastery, when, losing my knife, I endeavored to kill her by biting her neck; as I used to do when killing a chicken for cooking.

This fearful struggle seemed to last an hour, though it was certainly not more than two minutes, and then she fainted from the loss of blood; and I thought she was dead. I was now as mad as a wild bull, and my only thoughts were how to get the body out of the road.

Suddenly the idea occurred to me to throw the lamp, that was three quarters full of coal oil, under the bed, then taking the baby in my arms, run down to Isaac Coriel's house, which was only a little ways from ours. There I would tell them that two robbers had broken into the house, and after killing Mrs. Coriel, had set fire to the house.

No sooner had I conceived this project than it was put into execution. Snatching the lamp off the table, I hurled it under the bed with all my strength, and then pulling the bed clothes off the bed, I threw them in on the flames.

Then jumping to the crib, I grabbed Mamey up in my arms, and ran out of the room down into the yard. I shut to all the doors after me, and also the gate. When I picked up the baby she was awake and crying, having been roused no doubt by the noise of the fight between me and her mother.

I recollect, that, as I went past the body, the child saw Mrs. Coriel and held out its hands to her; and it cried very hard when it found I did not stop.

When I got out on the road I stood still a few moments, to tear my frock and pull down my hair, so as to give me a frightened, distressed appearance when I should arrive at Isaac Coriel's house. After this was done, I was just on the point of running up the road, when the thought came into my mind, that maybe, after all my stabbing, Mrs. Coriel was

not completely dead. She might possibly be alive yet, and would testify against me.

"I'll go back and see, anyhow," says I to myself.

When I opened the door, I found that Mrs. Coriel had really recovered her consciousness, and had crawled to the door in pursuit of me.

"Damn you!" exclaimed I "aint you dead, after all? I'm glad I come cack. Now just you crawl back into that room as fast as you can, or I'll kill the baby to!"

Saying this, I snatched up the knife, which had been thrown down on the floor, and made believe I was going to cut Mamey's throat. Mrs. Coriel turned round and motioned that she would do as she was told. I walked backward, still holding the knife ready, while every now and then I said:

"Damn you! why don't you hurry?"

I begun to be afraid that the fire would burn us all up together, and also that Doctor Coriel would be coming home. So, running in and putting the baby on the floor, I ran back again, and taking Mrs. Coriel by the hair and one arm, pulled her into the room as fast as possible.

The moment the baby saw her mother, she seemed to know what was going to be done, for she began to cry again and tried to creep very fast toward Mrs. Coriel.

At the same time I took up the leg of a chair that had been broken during the previous struggle, and snapped off the runnel, which had remained attached to it. I intended to beat out her brains with this.

As she saw Mamey trying to come to her, she seemed to get strong, and, just as I was about to finish her, she raised herself on her elbow and said:

"Oh, Bridget! for the love of God and the Virgin! let me kiss my poor little baby before you kill me! Won't you, please?"

"Well," said I, if you won't be long, I'll let you. So go ahead now, and be quick about it!"

By this time the baby had got pretty close, and, with a great effort, her mother kissed her, and then tried to get her arm around. But she was too weak for that.

Then, as I was getting more afraid that somebody would be coming, I grabbed hold of her and pulled her away from the baby, and stabbed her two or three times with the knife. Then I beat her head with the chair leg till I was quite sure that she was dead.

By this time the fire under the bed was getting headway, and grabbing the baby up, I ran out of the house once more. I shut all the doors after me, and also the gate, and then ran all the way up to Isaac Coriel's house.

There I hammered at the door and screamed with all my might, and I pinched the baby to make it scream to. Of course the family were soon

roused, and, poking their heads out of the windows asked what in the name of Heaven was the matter.

"Oh!" said I, making my voice tremble and choke; "two big robbers have broke into our house, and killed my mistress!"

In a few moments the Coriels were all out in the road, and Mr. Coriel, who was the Doctor's brother, got a bell, and begun to ring it with all his might, and halloo with all his voice, in order to start out the whole village.

It did not require long to do this; for in about five minutes everybody in the village was out in the road asking what was the matter; while a good many started up the road on a full run to Doctor Coriel's house. Others began to spread themselves out over the country to make a hunt for the murderers, whom I told them had run away.

I did not try to get away, for fear that it would cause suspicion; but I continued to nurse the baby, and endeavor to pacify her. But, somehow or other, she seemed to have become suddenly impressed with my true character.

That completely threw me off my guard. It seemed to me as though the spirit of poor Mrs. Coriel was hovering about in the air, and telling the baby all about me.

"Ah, now, Mamey" cried I "don't push Biddy away! Biddy didn't kill your mama!"

In this kind of way I tried to coax the child; but the harder I tried, the more she repelled me.

By this time we were back again at the house where the dark deed had been committed.

I saw them drag the body of Mrs. Coriel from out of the room where I had killed her, and which was now pretty well all blazing. Meanwhile one of the men, more inquisitive than the rest, began to examine the doors and the locks, and looking at me all the time in a very queer way.

At last he said:

"Well, neighbors, you may think just what you choose; but I tell you there has been no robbers about this place, not a bit of it. I will tell you who has killed Mrs. Coriel; it's that Irish girl standing there!"

"Do you know that's exactly what I am thinking myself, friend!" exclaimed another man.

A third added:

"There's no bolts broken, at any rate; and if robbers had bursted in, as she says that they did, there would be some evidence of it."

"Look ahere, woman," said a rough man, taking me by the arm, "you are the damned, infernal wretch who done this deed! Mrs. Coriel's neck is bit through on one side. No man would do that; especially where two men would be together. And another thing, that bite looks like as if it would fit that ugly mouth of yours. I'm going to take the risk of arrest-

ing you for the murder, anyhow; and if you're innocent you can prove it; and if you're guilty; that'll be proved too. But I'll bet a hundred dollars you are guilty!"

"Yes! yes! take her!" called out several of the crowd, "take her! she knows something of the murder!"

I was thereupon immediately arrested and kept secure till the sheriff came and took me to the jail here at New Brunswick.

At one time the crowd wanted to hang me on the spot; but they were prevented from doing so by the officers who had me in charge.

I had very strange feelings when I found myself placed in the cell all alone. Then for the first time I began to realize what I had done; and what a miserable, wicked wretch I was.

The ghost of my poor murdered mistress has never left me since I killed her. There it stands looking so sorrowful at me all the time; and never going away for an instant. I see it when I am awake and asleep, all the same, whether my eyes are open or shut. Oh! this is worse torture than being hung a dozen times over.

Sometimes it makes me almost wild; and I cry out and scream; and the prison keepers and everybody else think I am crazy.

But it will all be over tomorrow! Yes! it will all be over on this earth; but in the next world what will become of me? My spiritual advisers tell me to pray and I will be forgiven. But I don't know; I fear I will not be forgiven. I am afraid that praying will do me no good; and that my day of redemption is past.

Oh, horrible! the ghost is standing right here by me now! It comes closer and closer to me the nearer the hour of my execution draws on.

I cannot write much more, and I will therefore close by saying that I alone am the guilty one.

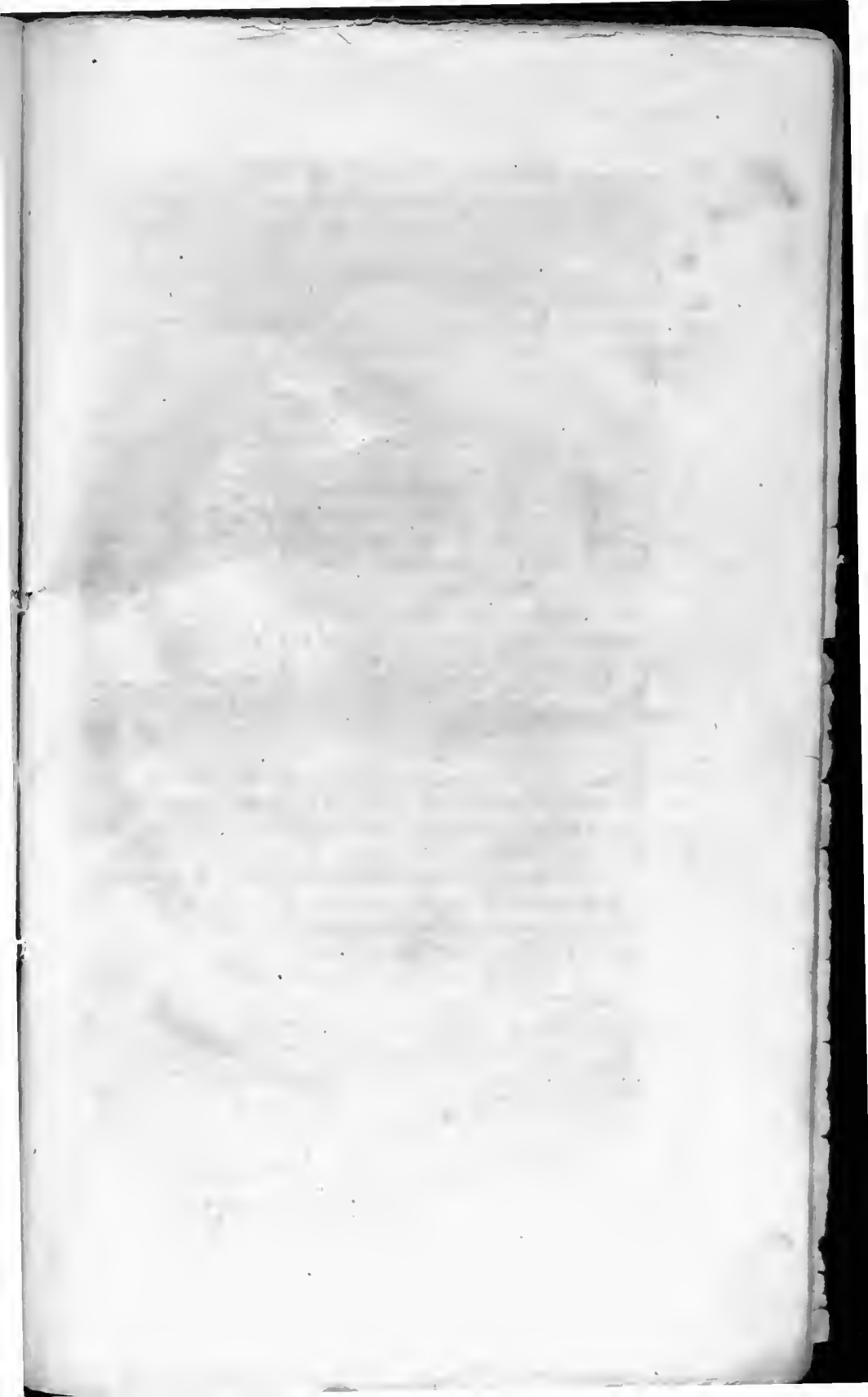
No person whatever assisted me to murder Mrs. Coriel. I did not kill her for the purpose of robbing the place, as I have seen it stated. My true and only object in committing the murder was this.

I thought that if I killed Mrs. Coriel, Doctor Coriel would have me to keep his house; and I even had the idea, that at some time I would become his wife.

The reason I thought so was because he was always so kind hearted to me, especially if I were sick. And that was so different from anybody else that I was sure he was in love with me. And here, before his murdered wife, I say that all that I said of his character was false! I hope he will try to forgive me for the injury I have done him.

I have now told the whole truth; and oh! I most humbly ask forgiveness of every one, and I hope good people will pray for my guilty soul!

BRIDGET DURGAN.





Taking the baby in her arms, the fiendish woman left the house of her poor victim, and started for the house of Isaac Coriell!



THE ONLY CORRECT LIKENESS OF BRIDGET DURGAN:
The fiendish murderess of Mrs. Coriel. From a photograph
Taken previous to her execution.

BRIDGET'S IMPRISONMENT.

There have been numbers of various accounts given in the papers of the conduct of Bridget Durgan during the time of her imprisonment previous to her execution. From among these it was almost impossible to obtain an authentic and reliable narrative as each of them purported to be the only veritable one. But from all the sources at command we publish the following, which we believe to be entirely correct; as it comports in every essential particular with her own narrative and confession.

During the first few days of her prison life she exhibited exactly the same traits that a wild beast would have done. Her eyes glared wildly; she would clutch her hands in the air, tug furiously at her straggling hair, rush from one side of the cell to the other, throw herself on her straw bed and bite it with her teeth.

The last net was a favorite one of hers and it proved very conclusively her guilt at least circumstantially; for the neck of her victim *was bitten* nearly through on one side.

But the dreary solitude of the narrow room with its barred window and strong, impassible door, and the stolid, stern face of the keeper, who alone gave her her food, reduced her to tameness. Yet even then the brutal part of her harsh nature was still predominant. She would crouch down, half sitting and half lying on her bed and leer up whenever the door was opened.

Her case being a peculiarly atrocious one she had not been in prison many days before she was almost besieged by philanthropically disposed ladies and gentlemen some of whom would even bring children with them. Of course as Christians we could never object to religions and well disposed people visiting the miserable inmates of a prison and endeavoring to mitigate the horrors of confinement; but we do think that latterly there has come to be too much of mandlin sympathy, as well as excitement in regard to these matters.

The more desperate and wicked the criminal is and the more deplorably wicked is his or her offense, the greater number of those well disposed but unthinking people flock to the cell to offer consolation and direct the mind to Heaven. And the natural goodness of their hearts causing them to pity the culprit, they generally take with them little presents of sweetmeats or segars or tobacco, as prison fare is so hard.

Such a mistaken course is in reality most injurious upon society. For there is always a class too ignorant and vicious to rise to distinction by good or great deeds; and yet being ambitious, they turn to crime to thereby become notorious. We recollect ourselves a case of a young girl, handsome, of respectable parentage, and with a fine intellect, who deliber-

ately sought the acquaintance of a libertine in order that she might be seduced, and thereby get her name up in the criminal paper. And while her parents and friends were bewailing the disgrace and ruin brought upon her and her family she eagerly bought the paper containing the account of her sin, and the likeness of herself and the villain, she actually gloried in showing the paper to parties who came to the house.

So with Bridget Durgan. When she found what an excitement her hideous crime had caused and began to be visited by the philanthropists we have mentioned, instead of her thoughts being diverted from the things of earth and directed to the awful future into which she was so soon to be ushered, they were intensely fastened on earthly matters. How she looked when the visitors came was a matter of much moment to her and what people said outside, whether they abused her much or little, what they thought &c. was also of the deepest interest to her.

The manifestations of this morbid desire on her part at last became so offensive as to positively disgust all the officers about the prison and in fact everybody else.

During the time Bridget's trial was going on she manifested the strangest indifference and seemed only to delight in narrating to visitors strings of lies and quasi confessions. Oftentimes after they had left her cell, she would throw herself on the bed and roar with semi-hysterical laughter.

"Now jest to thank!" she would exclaim to herself, "how b'autifally I fooled 'em, sitting there wid their mouths wide open leike barrn doors jest! But whisth ef I tell 'em me confisshun, an' tell ivery one different, they'll all think they've got the right one; an' they'll all spake a good wurd tell th' Gov'ner an' git me pardened jest. They says Jarsey folks is too hard on poor criminals jest. An' faith I b'lave 'em I do. They tell me I must have been crazy to do sich a wickedness as killin' of Mrs. Coriel, an' ef thot was properly put at th' Gov'ner he'd not hang me; an' thot afther awhile whin the noise had doied out a little I'd git pardened intirely and live a betther loife.

"Ha! gorra! gorra! that's it! I'm crazy and it aint hanging I want; but to be pardoned and live a betther loife! Yis! it's a betther loife I want tell live! I don't want hangin'! An' it's crazy I am! ha! gorra! gorra!"

Then she would feign madness and leap about and yell and scream till she was hoarse.

When night came then the terrors of her true position seemed to seize her with crushing effect. At these times she was exactly the reverse of violent. Instead of screaming and shouting as in the daytime, she would sliak down in the corner trembling, and her teeth gnashing and grinding together.

THE EXECUTION.

Most beautifully did the sun rise on Friday morning, August 30. 1867 and then it was that the miserable culprit recognized the full horror of her position.

She had slept very soundly and awoke about a quarter past five o'clock, apparently much refreshed. When asked what she would like for breakfast she answered that it did not make much difference, so long as it was good and plenty of it for she had a long journey before her. When the breakfast was brought to her she eat it with the greatest relish and enjoyment, just as though it was not the last meal she was ever to eat.

Immediately after she had finished her repast she was asked whether her spiritual advisers should now come in. She replied in the affirmative, and accordingly Rev. Fathers Dugan and Rogers entered her cell, and at once commenced their ministrations to the miserable woman. They were incessant in their efforts to turn her wandering thought into the proper channel. But it seemed as though she were afraid to trust her mind to think. Once, when she did so, she nearly broke down entirely; and it was feared that she would have to be borne to the scaffold. But the physician in attendance ordered the druggist to administer strong stimulants to her which had the desired effect. She spoke several times about the negro Rogers who had been executed so short a time previously in the self-same scaffold on which she was so soon to expiate her frightful crime.

She also sent for the woman Mary Gilroy, who, it will be recollected was at one time thought to be an accessory to the murder of Mrs. Coriel; but who was fully exonerated.

Bridget bade her live a good life and warned her that if she did not she would most likely meet with the same fate as that she herself was about to suffer.

Shortly after this the Sheriff entered the cell and announced that he was ready to perform his terrible duty. Bridget replied that she was prepared.

A Deputy then advanced with a strong thin rope and going behind the culprit, drew her elbows back and pinioned them tightly. This being done, the dismal procession began its slow march out of the cell into the yard, at the further extremity of which the gallows had been erected.

She was supported on either side by the ministers of God while Mr. Brendan held to her lips the crucifix that she kissed very fervently at short intervals. Now and then the condemned woman glanced furtively around her at the few patches of grass, and straggling bushes that were

growing in the Courtyard of the prison, and from these her eyes would turn up to the deep blue sky above her which she was to look at no more in this life.

Arriving at the foot of the gallows, Bridget's attention was called from the ghostly looking timbers and the dangling noose, for fear the sight might bring on an attack of epilepsy, and lead to the fearful necessity of hanging the miserable wretch while she was insensible.

Never for a moment did her comforters cease their exhortations to her; and it was doubtless this that enabled her to bear up under the dreadful ordeal she was passing.

There was an immense number of persons who render the plea of being deputies to the sheriff, had gained access to the yard and who had been crowding the yard from early in the morning. Among these morbidly curious people there was considerable disorder and confusion; jokes were bandied; and shouts and jeers exchanged until the opening of the great iron plated doors disclosed the solemn procession. the principal attraction of which was Bridget Durgan, the condemned criminal.

Instantly all became silent as the grave except the voices of the clergymen who were attending the prisoner, rendering the scene one of the utmost solemnity.

The Sheriff, fearful of the effect of any delay on the condemned, proceeded as briskly as possible with his duty, and the foot of the gallows was soon reached. The preparations here were speedily completed.

The culprit listened with great earnestness to the clergyman who was reading the service for the dead according to the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, and also to the words of hope and consolation that the others were whispering in her ears.

All being in readiness the Sheriff stepped forward, and examined everything to see that there would be no mistake or balk. Then with as much delicacy as possible he adjusted the fatal noose.

"God help me, now," were the last words she uttered as the black cap was drawn down over her face.

She was giving way very rapidly; and therefore the moment the cap was placed, the Sheriff sprang to the trap box, seized the axe, cut the check rope at a single blow, and Bridget Durgan was plunged into Eternity.

After dangling in the bright sunlight for half an hour the attending physicians pronounced the culprit dead. The law had been vindicated and when the body was lowered down, and placed in the coffin it was given over into the charge of the clergymen, who, conveyed it at once to the Catholic Cemetery, and laid it away to moulder until the last Trump should summon both Bridget and her unfortunate Mistress and victim to appear before the bar of God.

THE END.

BRIDGET DURGAN AND ANTOINE PROBST.

Among numbers of rumors that have been circulated about Bridget Durgan the miserable subject of the preceeding pages, was one to the effect that she was at one time the reputed wife of Antoine Probst, who it will be remembered, was the perpetrator of the atrocious Dearing murder.

About the truth or falsity of this assertion, we have been unable to ascertain anything positively, and it would, therefore, be unfair, even to such a wretch as Bridget Durgan, to record such a thing against her as being true.

Her name, and her grave are already sufficiently dishonored by her own wicked deeds, without adding more infamy to the load already on them. But one thing is certain, and that is, that, so far as inclination, temperament, and disposition were concerned, there never were two human beings more alike than Antoine Probst and Bridget Durgan. Both were possessed of the most depraved animal instincts, the most violent passion and the greatest blood thirstiness. A gentleman, accustomed all his life to criminals, said of Bridget:

"She is the most perfect combination of the wolf, the tiger, the hog and the hyena, that I ever came across."

The whole period during which Bridget was in prison, her constant anxiety was as to the amount of excitement she was producing. And so she continued till an hour or two before her execution; when she gave up all things and thoughts, except of death.

Her history will doubtless make wives very cautious about what kind of women they have in their households as domestics.



THE FINAL ACT OF JUSTICE.
Execution of Bridget Durgan, at New Brunswick, New Jersey.

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Taking the baby in her arms, the fiendish woman left the house of
her poor victim, and started for the house of Isaac Coriel!